



MEDIA RELEASE

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The Australian Fitness & Health Expo celebrates – 15 years on and still going strong

2010 will mark the 15th birthday of the Australian Fitness & Health Expo – the largest fitness and health event to be staged annually in Australia.

Exhibition Manager, Ashley Robertson, said the milestone was indicative of the success of the event and its popularity and necessity amongst the Australian fitness industry.

“The expo has functioned as the must-attend event for the industry since its introduction to the scene in 1995. Since its inception, the exhibition has sustained ongoing growth and continued to address and reflect the fluctuating trends and needs of this complex industry,” Robertson said.

The early years

In 1987, the Australian Fitness Network hosted its first fitness convention and mini tradeshow on the Gold Coast – known as the Network Convention, the event ran annually until 1999 when it changed scene to Melbourne. Following a successful launch in Melbourne, the event alternated on an annual basis between the two cities.

Nigel Champion, CEO of Australian Fitness Network, said that their experience with the Gold Coast and Melbourne events had prompted them to reconsider the needs of the industry and in the mid 90's, the company recognised a need to host a fitness convention and exhibition in Sydney.

“We identified an opportunity in the Sydney market for a fitness convention and an expo that would appeal to not only the Australian market but also the wider Asia Pacific region – and so the Fitness Industry Leisure Expo was born,” Champion said.

Fondly known as FILEX, the acronym was coined to reflect both the convention and the exhibition, and in 1995, the inaugural event debuted at Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour.

The first FILEX

“FILEX debuted in 1995 and attracted 60 exhibitors and in excess of 3000 visitors. Back then Personal Training was exclusively for the rich and famous so the majority of suppliers were more focused on the



needs of group exercise and strength training. This focus was reflected in the exhibitors which were primarily music, clothing and equipment suppliers,” Champion said.

Multi-million dollar leisure brand, Lorna Jane, took space at the inaugural event and, following a successful introduction to the event, has continued to exhibit every year since.

Founder, Lorna Jane Clarkson, said that she took a chance on the first expo as it was the largest event of its kind on offer in Australia and provided a platform for her business to showcase the Lorna Jane brand to the fitness industry.

“We could see that the expo provided an opportunity for all the Australian fitness industry to come together and allowed us to identify new customers. Since we first exhibited back in 1995, the expo has become a tremendous vehicle to showcase our ranges and gather feedback from the people who live in our products,” Ms Clarkson said.

2010 also marks a special milestone for Lorna Jane with the 20th anniversary of the label which, from humble beginnings, has flourished to almost 500 employees and 70 stores across Australia and overseas.

Other exhibitors included Gatorade, Reebok, Nike, IEP Body Mechanics, Avia, Clubnet, Ecomist, Repco Fitness, Kelmix, Cutting Edge, HF Industries, Aerobics Wear Australia, Mono, Music and Motion, Amedican Streetware, LA Gear, Rhythm Express and Rock Wear.

In 1998, the exhibition took on Gatorade as its major sponsor and was renamed The Gatorade Fitness Expo. The sponsorship naming rights narrowed the relevancy for what is a dynamic industry and in 2001; the exhibition was renamed and became the Australian Fitness Expo. The new name repositioned the expo by increasing the visitor demographic to include the growing number of consumers in the fitness and healthy lifestyle industries.

A change of hands

Diversified Exhibitions Australia purchased the event from the Australian Fitness Network in 2005 as the continued growth of the expo called for the more specialised skills of an exhibition business.

“The exhibition was a large event and we were keen to bring our resources back to servicing the ongoing professional needs of our members. In order for the expo to achieve and maintain its growth, it needed proper exhibition management – the sale to Diversified was the right choice and six years later, we still believe we made the right decision,” Champion said.



Diversified Exhibition Manager, Ashley Robertson, said Diversified was attracted to the expo as it fit well with the company's core business values.

"Diversified seeks to connect, educate and strengthen business communities through market-leading events. We identified FILEX as an exhibition that was contributing to the health and wellbeing of people in both the fitness and local communities and offered room for substantial growth," Robertson said.

A new era of fitness

The emergence of the modern day personal trainer in the late 90's provoked substantial changes for both the fitness expo and the wider fitness industry. Traditionally, the industry had centred on the operation of fitness centres that focused on servicing exercise classes to music – often referred to as aerobics.

With the industry trending towards Personal Training, many new opportunities, programs, resources and businesses were created and were reflected in the changing nature of fitness expo exhibitors. With a much greater diversity in the range of exhibitors, the expo evolved into a 'must attend' industry event.

"Diversified has endeavoured to focus on the needs of the industry – which continually evolves in response to international health and fitness trends and the development of society in general. Year on year, we adjust the expo to suit the requirements of the industry and, through time, this has seen substantial changes in the exhibitions dynamics," Robertson said.

In 2010, Diversified announced yet another re-naming of the expo to recognise the gains that fitness companies are making in the health industry.

Robertson said that the rebrand of the show for 2010 has shifted the focus back to trade to ensure that industry participants will have access to the most up to date knowledge available.

"Each year the event has sustained its growth with more exhibitors and more visitors showcasing the latest trends in the fitness and health industry. This longevity demonstrates the strength of the fitness industry and ensures the continual injection of more and more leading product and service into the Australian market," Robertson said.

The Australian Fitness & Health Expo provides a platform for the entire industry to meet, discover what's new, network and learn. With more than 300 exhibitors, stage demonstrations, seminars, and much more, the expo allows fitness professionals to educate themselves and the wider community.



The 15th Australian Fitness & Health Expo will take place at Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, 30 April – 2 May 2010.

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ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN FITNESS & HEALTH EXPO

The Australian Fitness & Health Expo is the industry's largest expo for the fitness and health industry in Australia. The pinnacle event for the fitness industry, the expo attracts more than 15,000 buyers and connects attendees with manufacturers, suppliers and retailers in health and fitness industry. Further information:

www.fitnessexpo.com.au

ABOUT DIVERSIFIED EXHIBITIONS

Diversified Exhibitions is one of Australia's largest exhibition organising companies with a portfolio of 30 trade and consumer exhibitions, operating in key industry sectors such as Food, Security, Building, Oil & Gas, Fitness and Retail. Diversified runs exhibitions at premier venues throughout Australia and has its head-office in Melbourne. Further information: **www.divexhibitions.com.au**

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*The exhibition will be open to trade-only on Friday and to the general public Saturday and Sunday